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THE MONTANIAN

Libby MT 59923

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Superior Clipping Service

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ASK EPA!!

Questions and Answers about Asbestos and EPA's Investigation

Q: What happened with the construction of the motocross track? Was any asbestos found in the area?

A: Due to concern about potential Libby asbestos contamination in the soil, EPA asked that construction stop until additional sampling could be done. The site's proximity to contaminated areas led EPA to believe additional sampling was necessary. Samples did not show asbestos in the motocross track area and construction of the track has resumed.

EPA contractors inspected the area and conducted sampling on May 15. The samples were taken from the surface and from various depths. Samplers also tried to take samples from the original ground surface so that historic contamination that may have gotten covered could be detected.

No visible vermiculite or other visual indicators or contamination were found. All samples results came back "non-detect" for Libby asbestos. A "non-detect" does not necessarily mean a complete absence of asbestos. However, if even a single asbestos structure is observed during the analysis, the result is reported as "trace" and EPA counts this as a "detect."

The samples were analyzed by a method of polarized light microscopy (PLM) developed specifically by EPA Region 8 for analysis of Libby soils. The method has a detection limit of about .1-.2% asbestos. EPA's current cleanup level for soils is 1%, however, once a soil cleanup is triggered by the 1% level, EPA cleans up all areas with *any* detects – even trace. This increases protectiveness and reduces the possibility of having to revisit a property.

For more detailed information on EPA's cleanup levels, please read the "Residential/Commercial Cleanup Action Level and Clearance Criteria" Technical Memorandum dated December 2003. It can be found in the EPA Information Center at 501 Mineral Avenue in Libby.

For more information call toll free:

Wendy Thomi toll-free at 1-866-457-2690 extension 5037 or
EPA Information Center at 293-6194